

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
21 3rd Sunday Fellowship 	22	23 Happy Birthday Rich Therrien	24 Christmas Eve Service 7:00	25 Happy Birthday Tyler Apgar 	26 Happy Birthday Eric Apgar	27 Happy Birthday Alan Chamberlain & Jolene Karafelis <i>Elder/Deacon Meeting</i>
28	29 Happy Birthday Joanne Hazelton	30	31	Jan 1 2015 Happy Birthday Linda Paul	2	3
4 Pizza & Planning for Youth Rally 12:00	5 Monday Night for the Master	6 Happy Anniversary Oseola & Kehinde Ogunsuyi	7	8	9	10 <i>Elder/Preacher Meeting</i>



Help Wanted...Shepherd, Fisherman, Carpenter...

As you journey along the paths where your Bible studies guide you sometimes you just have to wonder at the mind of God. We look at routes God blazed to lead His people, and realize that only God would have been able to see what His people needed. Travel with me down a few of God's roads.

Moses, Hebrew by birth, saved by his mother's wisdom and a watertight basket, to be raised as an Egyptian prince. However, God was not in need of a prince, He needed a shepherd. So down the path

Moses goes spending a few quiet years tending sheep. Yet, he was a shepherd like no other, a shepherd with a prince's education. Now, God had a man with the knowledge of leadership, but a shepherd's heart to lead his new nation. It is probably no coincidence that God led Samuel to another shepherd, David, as His chosen king to lead Israel.

Fast forward a few hundred years, and we see some of Christ's closest companions were fishermen. How fitting that the group he chose to mentor and spread His message, had engrained in them hard work, teamwork, and an aversion to letting "one get away."

Now look at the path God chose for a Savior. He could have been born into royalty, power or influence, but God had another design. He chose a young virgin, most likely a teenager, and an earthly father who was a carpenter. Christ grew up with a humble mother and father as his example. You must wonder how this example, along with spending hours watching and helping his father shape wood—seeing in the wood what few others could see, gave Jesus the tools needed to shape the destiny of the world?

To be sure God sees things we fail to grasp, which leaves us asking this question. What does God see in us that He needs to shape the world? What is in you, the homemaker, accountant, teacher, driver, engineer, nurse, farmer, teenager, child, shepherd, fisherman, carpenter... that God has given you for His purpose? The "Help Wanted" sign is out.



~Wade McKnight

NOTES FROM YOUR SHEPHERDS:

A prayer for you: May you be Jesus to someone who doesn't yet know Him. May you share the faith, hope, and love in your heart with those who are troubled. May you be the hug, the listening ear, the gentle word or the helpful gesture someone needs as you live the Christian life as best you know how. May you be blessed in all ways in your journey with Jesus this week.

TEENS



Thanks for your work on the treats for the younger kids! You guys ROCK!

Jan 4 Youth Rally Pizza & Planning @ noon

Bring \$4.00 and stay for lunch and a planning meeting. This is YOUR youth rally so be sure to come!



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Dec 28	WORSHIP LEADERS
Steve Johnson	Songs
Brandon Hombs	Closing Prayer
Dave Skerry	Scripture
Karl Davies	Lord's Supper
Barry Fogal	Worship Tech
Rich Therrien	Coordinator
Dave Skerry	Call to Worship
Park L. or Steve J.	Songs pm
Dec 24- Stuart Peacock	Wed Songs
Dec 24- Christmas Eve	Wed Devotional

Statistics

Sunday morning attendance:...126
 Sunday morning contribution:...\$5460.00
 Weekly budget.....\$3800.00
 Pantry Served 2 Families this week.

The Manchester church of Christ

603.623.5559 mht_church@comcast.net

Our Worship Services

Sunday AM: 9:30
 Bible Class: 11:00
 Sunday PM: 6:00 (3rd Sunday congregational potluck @ noon)
 Small Groups:
 West Side: 5:30 at the Pauls' - Study of Acts.
 Merrimack: 5:30 - youth studies
 Building: 6 pm, The book of Revelation
 Wednesday PM Devotional/Bible Classes: 7:00

Contact David Skerry with Benevolence/Pantry needs.



Our Minister:

Park Linscomb 540-0287

Our Shepherds:

Barry Fogal 487-2387
 Gerry Millette 497-3105
 Mike Moser 429-9487

Our Deacons:

Tony Casella- Finance
 Fred Hillhouse- Facilities
 Doug Paul- Education
 Stuart Peacock- Worship
 Pete Steffensen- Facilities
 David Skerry- Benevolence & Outreach

Shepherds' Link: December

Mike Moser 429-9487
heymikeymo@comcast.net
 Barry Fogal 326-8004
barryfogal@me.com

If you have any concerns that the shepherds should be aware of, or need to speak with them, please contact Barry or Mike this month.

Our Family

Ephesians 2:19 "19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,"

We are so pleased that you have joined us for worship this morning! If you are visiting, we hope that you will feel warmly welcomed by our church family. Our prayer is that you may be encouraged and uplifted as we worship together. Please join us downstairs after worship for some coffee and fellowship, followed by bible classes for all ages.



News & Important Dates

TODAY @ noon we will have our 3rd Sunday Fellowship Luncheon. If you are visiting we would love to have you stay and join us for our potluck lunch!

Christmas Eve falls on Wednesday this year. We will have a special worship that evening so invite your friends and family to join us!

Wednesday evening dinners: If you'd like to serve the church by planning and cooking this weekly meal, there's a volunteer list in the foyer.

There will be no Wednesday evening meal on Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve.

PLANNING AHEAD:

2015 Youth Rally— There will be a Pizza and Planning session on Sunday January 4th at noon. If you are interested in helping to plan our youth rally, please come! You don't have to be a teen or even a parent of a teen to participate! Bring \$4.00 to cover lunch.

Attention Teen & Young Men! Would you like to learn more about preaching and leading worship? On January 17th Park will begin a monthly class to learn how to do those very things. The class will meet from 10:00-noon. See Park for more details.

Are you interested in learning about events at other congregations in New England? Check out:

necentralbulletinboard.wordpress.com

Please Pray...

- ☀ ENCOURAGEMENT— for our shepherds, deacons, teachers, and preacher; the sick in health and in spirit.
- ☀ PRAISE—Anthony is home recovering.
- ☀ NEEDS EMPLOYMENT— Jim Kenison, Yann Lecat
- ☀ HEALING— Anthony Davis, Louise Linscomb, Annabeth Hickman, Natalie Cleavitt, Deb Dlutowski; Gary Chase; Mary Jane; David Black; Angela Beard; Rita Jones; James McLaughlin; Chrissy McLaughlin; Peggy Mailloux; Linda Tetrault; Brian Day; Casandra Martin; John Matthew; David Paul
- ☀ CANCER TREATMENTS—Curtis Winstead, Gina Jonston, Lynn Millette, Dave Seguin, David Lovering, John Matthew; Barbara Ann (Margery's cousin); Jeff Blackmon
- ☀ OUTREACH—for Jean Cadet to come to know the Lord; Bible studies in progress, food pantry; Friendspeak.

**If you have updates to prayer requests, please call the office or let Susie know.*

His name shall be
JESUS
for He will save
people from
their sins.
Matthew 1:21



THE REASON FOR THE SEASON



Well, Christmas is just about upon us. In many respects it is a wonderful, special time of year; but in other respects it is a source of controversy and cynicism. Which is it really? Let's take a thoughtful look at it from the Scripture's and wisdom's point of view.

Jesus' Birthday?

Many of us (hopefully, all of us) know that no one really knows the birthdate of Jesus Christ. The traditional timing for the holiday (December 25, of course) is probably very wrong, since it is the least likely time of the year for shepherds and their flocks to be in the fields at night; the rainy season in Israel peaks in December and January. Jesus' birth is far more likely to have been in late spring or summer, when it is warmer and drier and shepherds would indeed be in the fields at night. But the timing of the celebration isn't really crucial, the event is.

Commanded or Not?

You will look from beginning to end—and back again—in the New Testament and not find a any sort of command to celebrate Jesus' birth. The truth is that Christmas is a traditional celebration, not a command. Now, some may recoil at the word "tradition", but before we write off the holiday, because it is only a tradition, let's remember that Jesus Himself celebrated the tradition of Hanukkah (John 10:22,23), established in the intertestamental period to commemorate the purification of the Temple (164 BC) after the dark days of Antiochus Epiphanes. Tradition needs to be rejected only when it is equated to or contradicts Scripture, God's word. And the celebration of the birth of the Savior does neither; therefore, we are free to do so and free to not do so.

Of course, the way that *some* celebrate Christmas *does* contradict Scripture (e.g., idolatry, debauchery), and in these cases the Christian must stand apart from the crowd. For some, this would reason enough not to celebrate Christmas; that's their personal choice. For others, it is possible and even useful (see below) to jettison the bad and keep the good of Christmas.

Gift Giving?

Giving gifts at a time of celebration is common all over the world (e.g., birthdays, weddings, holy days), and it is a major emphasis to many during the Christmas season. But while it is a time of giving (supposedly in imitation of the visit of Magi story), it mustn't become the major focus. For some, Christmas is "the ecstasy of unbridled avarice" (to quote *A Christmas Story*); but for the Christian, it should be—it must be—much more.

Give gifts; but major on the majors, not the minors—give your children something eternal, not just temporal.

Family Time?

We all love the precious time with family that Christmas usually brings, too, and that is good and right to do—we seem to get so little of it anymore. But even this good and wholesome reason is not really the true point of Christmas.

The Reason for the Season!

The true point is the wonderful birth of Jesus, the Christ. God's promises of rescue and deliverance from sin and death were not going to be just pie-in-the-sky, not just vapor-ware (for you computer geeks out there), not unkept and neglected promises; they would be fulfilled. The defeat of Satan, the victory over evil, the beginning of the end of Eden's curse was becoming physical reality.

And then there is the glorious miracle of His birth. I'm not just talking about the virgin birth, as amazing and mind-blowing as it was and is. No, I'm talking about God becoming flesh, about fitting the ocean of Deity into the thimble of a human body, about the descent of the Creator to become like the creation—so that He could...

- not just walk a mile but a lifetime in our shoes
- suffer pain like we do
- get sick like we do
- get tempted like we do
- get physically tired like men
- be limited as we are
- leave a real life example like no one else ever did
- suffer injustice as we do
- be profoundly humiliated by other men as we sometimes are
- die—excruciatingly, like none ever will
- save us like no one else possibly could
- and rise from the dead like we all will someday

And it is one of the two times of the year that many in our culture actually reflect on the spiritual and consider Jesus. That's the reason that atheists want to take it out of the public view, and why Satan tries to make it all about the material stuff.

So, as far as Christmas goes: major on the majors, minor on the minors, reject what needs to be rejected, and whether you celebrate the tradition or not, don't forget that it is a wonderful opportunity to share and talk about "the **Reason** for the season" with others.

Park Linscomb